

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R T E X T

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDIP, EAID, SCUL, VM, US
SUBJECT: CHURCH WORLD SERVICE VISIT TO VIETNAM

REF: STATE 128354

1. SUMMARY: REVIEWING CHURCH WORLD SERVICE (CWS) DELEGATION'S RECENT TRIP TO VIETNAM, DELEGATION LEADER CLAIMED SRV IS PREPARED TO NORMALIZE IF US MAKES GESTURE BY DROPPING TRADE EMBARGO. SRV OFFICIALS REQUESTED CWS PROVIDE SEVERAL AMERICAN TECHNICIANS TO WORK IN VIETNAM. DELEGATION WAS INFORMED THAT RE-EDUCATION CAMPS WILL BE CLOSED IN TWO TO THREE MONTHS WITH MAJORITY OF INMATES TO GO FREE; THE REMAINDER TO FACE CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS. END SUMMARY

2. LOCAL CWS EMPLOYEE INVITED CONGENOFF TO MEET CWS DELEGATION JUST RETURNED FROM VIETNAM. CWS GROUP VISITED VIETNAM
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MAY 12-27 TO WITNESS ARRIVAL OF 10,000 TON WHEAT SHIPMENT ORGANIZED BY CWS AND TO ASSESS PRESENT CONDITIONS IN VIETNAM. DELEGATION, HEADED BY CWS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DR. PAUL MCCLEARY, INCLUDED JOHN HENRY FAULK, ABC TELEVISION ENTERTAINER; DR. ROBERT BROWNE, PRESIDENT OF BLACK ECONOMICS RESEARCH CENTER, NEW YORK; CHRIS CUNNINGHAM, YWCA; HARVEY SCHMIDT, KANSAS WHEAT FARMER;

DR. ALFRED BARTHOLOMEW, CHAIRMAN OF CHURCH WORLD SERVICE COMMITTEE; AND CORA WEISS, CONSULTANT TO CWS FOR WHEAT SHIPMENT. ALL DELEGATION MEMBERS EXCEPT BROWNE AND BARTHOLOMEW WERE PRESENT IN HONG KONG.

3. MCCLEARY INFORMED CONGENOFF THAT THE DELEGATION SPENT TWO AND A HALF HOURS WITH SRV PRIME MINISTER PHAM VAN DONG (MEETING WAS SET FOR ONE HOUR BUT DONG REPORTEDLY EXTENDED IT CAUSING WAITING ROMANIAN DELEGATION TO COOL THEIR HEELS). MCCLEARY SAID THAT A "HIGH-RANKING SRV OFFICIAL" INDICATED VIETNAM WANTED RELATIONS WITH US BUT WAS WAITING FOR GESTURE FROM WASHINGTON. VIETNAMESE OFFICIAL REPORTEDLY OBSERVED THAT US HAD ESTABLISHED TRADE RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION BEFORE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND FELT SAME PATTERN COULD BE FOLLOWED WITH VIETNAM.

4. IN RESPONSE TO CONGENOFF QUESTION, MCCLEARY SAID THAT PHAM VAN DONG TERMED "NOT CORRECT" THE ARTICLE CARRIED IN FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW REPORTING SRV MESSAGE THROUGH THIRD COUNTRY STATING VIETNAM HAD ABANDONED US AID GUARANTEE AS PRECONDITION TO NORMALIZATION (REFTEL).

5. CORA WEISS SEPARATELY COMMENTED TO CONGENOFF THAT VIETNAMESE MADE POINT OF STRESSING THAT US HAD TRADE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RELATIONS WITH PRC AND USSR BEFORE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. SHE APPEARED TO CONSIDER THAT THIS WAS A CORRECT VERSION OF THE "MESSAGE" INCORRECTLY REPORTED BY FEER. SHE ADDED THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE JUST WAITING FOR THE PHONE TO RING EITHER ON SETTING DATE FOR THE SRV VISIT TO THE JCRC INSTALLATIONS IN HAWAII OR FOR MEETING IN PARIS. IT WAS UP TO WASHINGTON TO MAKE THE CALL.

6. MCCLEARY SAID HE WAS MAINLY INTERESTED IN FOOD SHORTAGE IN VIETNAM AND THE SRV-DC BORDER CONFLICT. HE DESCRIBED THE FOOD SITUATION AS SERIOUS WITH RATIONING BECOMING INCREASINGLY SEVERE. THE DELEGATION WITNESSED THE ARRIVAL IN SAIGON OF THE CHARTERED GREEK SHIP CARRYING THE 10,000 TONS OF AMERICAN WHEAT AND VISITED A WHEAT PROCESSING FACTORY WHERE SOME OF THE WHEAT WAS CONVERTED INTO BREAD AND NOODLES.

7. MCCLEARY ALSO DESCRIBED THE DELEGATION'S VISIT TO AN GIANG PROVINCE WHERE THEY WERE TAKEN TO THE CAMBODIAN BORDER. THE DELEGATION REPORTEDLY SIGHTED MANY BURNED BUILDINGS AND DESTROYED BRIDGES IN THE AREA AND VISITED A "WELL-RUN" CAMP FOR CAMBODIAN POWS AS WELL AS A LARGE

CAMP FOR CAMBODIAN REFUGEES. MCCLEARY MENTIONED THAT UNHCR WAS CONSIDERING A PROGRAM TO SUPPORT CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN VIETNAM.

8. CONCERNING THE ONGOING FLOW OF CHINESE FROM VIETNAM TO THE PRC, MCCLEARY COMMENTED THAT HE BELIEVED THIS EXODUS WAS CAUSED BY VIETNAM'S MARCH 23 EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE BOURGEOIS TRADE AND CORRUPTION. HE SAID THAT THESE MEASURES APPLIED TO THE NORTH AS WELL AS THE SOUTH AND THAT MERCHANTS WERE GIVEN THE CHOICE OF ENGAGING IN PRODUCTIVE LABOR OR GOING TO THE NEW ECONOMIC ZONES. CHINESE HAD THE ADDED OPTION OF LEAVING VIETNAM FOR CHINA. MANY WERE OBVIOUSLY TAKING THIS OPTION.

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9. MCCLEARY SAID THAT BECAUSE OF A LACK OF TIME HE WAS UNABLE TO VISIT ANY RE-EDUCATION CAMPS BUT UNDERSTOOD THAT OVER 90 PERCENT OF THE PRESENT INMATES WOULD BE RELEASED AND THE CAMPS CLOSED WITHIN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE MONTHS. THOSE NOT RELEASED WOULD FACE "CRIMINAL PROCEDURES."

10. MCCLEARY REPORTED THAT THE VIETNAMESE ASKED CWS TO PROVIDE AMERICAN TECHNICIANS SPECIALIZED IN TEACHER TRAINING TO WORK IN VIETNAM. CWS WILL CONSIDER SENDING TWO OR THREE SPECIALISTS TO CARRY OUT THIS PROGRAM. MCCLEARY ADDED THAT CWS ALSO INTENDED TO APPLY FOR A US LICENSE TO IMPORT VIETNAMESE HANDICRAFTS INTO THE US. CONGENOFF RESPONDED THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT SUCH A LICENSE WOULD BE ISSUED SINCE THE NATURE OF THE PROPOSAL WAS COMMERCIAL RATHER THAN HUMANITARIAN.

11. COMMENT: DR. MCCLEARY WILL RETURN TO NEW YORK SHORTLY AND INDICATED THAT HE PLANS VISIT WASHINGTON SOON TO DISCUSS HIS RECENT TRIP WITH MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND PERHAPS SOME WHITE HOUSE STAFF. HE OFFERED TO MEET WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IF DESIRED. THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH TO DISCUSS THE CWS VISIT WITH DR. MCCLEARY, AND IN PARTICULAR, TO CLARIFY WHETHER THE VIETNAMESE COMMENTS MADE TO THE CWS GROUP ARE IN FACT A CHANGE IN THE VIETNAMESE POSITION OR SIMPLY A RESTATEMENT OF PREVIOUSLY ADVANCED SRV VIEWS. MUCH OF THE ABOVE IS CARRIED IN AP STORY FILED ON MAY 29 IN BANGKOK.
SHOESMITH

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